

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

THE GWOT EVOLUTION: HAS THE UNITED STATES OPENED PANDORA'S BOX?

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ABSTRACT

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The war on terrorism was the battle cry sounded by the United States in response to the events of 9/11. The enemy in this war was different than any the United States had faced before. The threat posed by al Qaeda and the radical ideology it inspired required changing how the United States would approach problems and issues in the future. Unfortunately, instead of changing its strategy to fit the problem, the United States changed the problem to fit its known strategies. The war on terrorism evolved into a war on rogue states and weapons of mass destruction, the foreign policy approach the United States was pursuing before 9/11. This evolution gave the impression that the U.S. was overstepping its legal and moral authority. Support for the United States dropped significantly, both internationally and domestically. At issue is the question, has the U.S. opened up the proverbial "Pandora's Box" by expanding the war on terrorism beyond terrorists and their ideology? What impact will this have on U.S. interests and influence in the world? This paper will explore these questions and reveal that a refocusing of the U.S. foreign policy is required into the next century.

THE GWOT EVOLUTION: HAS THE UNITED STATES OPENED PANDORA'S BOX?

The first, the supreme...act of judgment...is to establish...the kind of war on which [statesman and commander] are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature.¹

—Carl Von Clausewitz

On September 20, 2001, nine days after terrorists flew planes into the World Trade Center Towers and the Pentagon, President George W. Bush introduced a new concept to the world, a concept that has become the “battle cry” for the twenty-first century ...the war on terrorism. This concept was revealed in a speech President Bush gave to a joint session of Congress and televised to the American people. In this speech, he identified the terrorist organization, al Qaeda and its leader, Osama bin Laden as the responsible parties behind the attacks of 9/11. President Bush stated that the war on terror begins with al Qaeda but does not end until, “every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated.” The “war” would be fought using every resource, means of diplomacy, tool of intelligence, instrument of law enforcement, financial influence, and weapon of war – “to the disruption and to the defeat of the global terror network.”² Thus, the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) had begun and the enemy America and her allies were pursuing was clearly defined as global terrorist groups.

This enemy was different than any the United States had faced before, it was not found in any particular nation but rather had followers dispersed across the world, organized and united for one purpose, “remaking the world and imposing its radical beliefs on people everywhere.”³ The threat posed by al Qaeda and its radical ideology would require changing how the United States approached problems and issues in the Middle East. Unfortunately, instead of changing its strategy to fit the problem, the United States changed the problem to fit the strategy it was comfortable pursuing. Thus, from October 2001 onward, the focus of GWOT and United States’ foreign policy began to shift from the pursuit of terrorists’ organizations into pursuing rogue states and weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The analysis that follows suggests that the evolution of GWOT has resulted in the United States being seen as “the oppressor” rather than “the liberator”, and as such its global influence is diminishing and anti-Americanism is increasing globally. The assertion by the United States that it is simply focusing on eliminating supporters and “safe harbors” for global terrorists is being viewed with increased skepticism and by some observers as downright hypocritical. The context for making the argument that an expanding GWOT strategy is producing negative views of the United States will be an assessment of the United States’ historical policy and recent actions taken within the Middle East region, along with an assessment of approval ratings of the United States from 2001 to 2006 among

interested parties. The evidence warrants a refocusing of the United States' long-term strategy within the region, internationally, and domestically. At issue is the question, has the United States opened up the proverbial "Pandora's Box" by expanding GWOT beyond the pursuit of al Qaeda and the radical movement that it inspires and what impact will this have on U.S. interests at home and abroad?

The Current Situation

When the World Trade Center towers fell and the Pentagon was ablaze on September 11, 2001, tremendous goodwill and sympathy were bestowed on America from all over the world. Even America's traditional adversaries such as Iran, Syria, Libya, Cuba and North Korea expressed their outrage and offered limited assistance. But in the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq, the turnaround in public sentiment and multinational support for the U.S.-led war on terror was profound.⁴ The reason for this turnaround can be understood by exploring significant changes in the United States' position that took place between September 11, 2001 and early 2007, and analyzing the reaction to these events by drawing on surveys published during this time period.

On September 14, 2001, the United States House of Representatives' Joint Resolution 64, *Authorization for Use of Military Force*, provided Congressional approval to President Bush to use military force in the war on terrorism. The resolution gave the President authority to, "use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or people."⁵ With the passage of HJ Resolution 64, along with President Bush's speech to Congress and the American people on September 20, 2001, the United States had identified and publicly declared it would focus its efforts on defeating al Qaeda and its radical movement as its response to the 9/11 attacks. Over time, however, the United States began to stray from this focused strategy.

In a November 2001 Rose Garden ceremony welcoming back aid workers rescued in Afghanistan, President Bush linked the war on terrorism to WMD, claiming that countries developing WMD were always part of his definition of terrorists.⁶ In his State of the Union address on January 29, 2002, President Bush did not make a single direct reference either to al Qaeda or Osama bin Laden. Instead he identified North Korea, Iran and Iraq as regimes that "constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world."⁷ Clearly what was happening was GWOT was experiencing "mission creep", the United States was expanding the

“war” beyond the intention of HJ Resolution 64 and back towards its pre 9/11 foreign policy focusing on rogue states and WMD.

Was the decision for a regime change in Iraq, the logical “next step” in GWOT or was it simply, as opponents of the policy imply; another example of the United States flexing its military muscle in order to pursue its own interests at the expense of the indigenous population? There is no question that Saddam Hussein was an evil dictator, who butchered his own people to secure his power. In that regard, he represented what was wrong with other Middle Eastern governments. Using the words in HJ Resolution 64 as the criteria for determining if Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) qualifies as part of GWOT strategy, one needs to ask; “Was Saddam Hussein involved in planning, authorizing, committing or aiding in the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001?” “Did he harbor al Qaeda or any of its operatives who were involved in the attacks?” Without this type of irrefutable evidence, which was sought but never confirmed, the United States’ decision to invade Iraq appeared to most of the world, as an example of the United States exercising its unilateral power beyond retaliation for the 9/11 attacks. To most Muslims it confirmed Osama bin Laden’s platform that the United States was a Crusader in the land of Islam.⁸

Surveys conducted by the Pew Research Center from December 2001 thru June 2006 reflect an inverse relationship between Muslims’ approval of the United States and significant foreign policy decisions made and actions taken by the United States during this time period (see table 1.)⁹

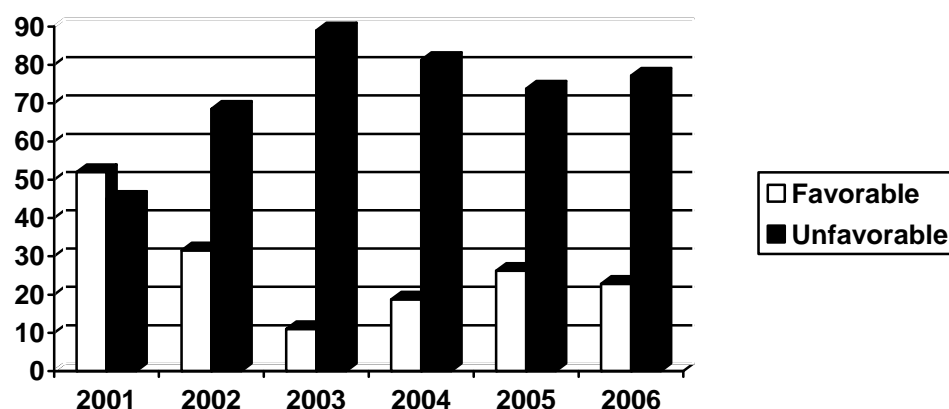


Table 1. Muslim Opinions of the U.S.

For example, as reflected in Table 1, Muslims viewed the United States favorably immediately after September 11, 2001 when U.S. actions to pursue and defeat al Qaeda were seen to be an appropriate response to the attacks on America. However, as the United States began to turn its focus and rhetoric away from al Qaeda and towards Iraq in 2002, the Muslim population's approval of the United States began to decline. In 2003, after the United States invaded Iraq, Muslims' approval of the United States dropped significantly. Slight increases were reflected in the favorable rating for both 2004 and 2005; however 2006 reflected a slight decrease in Muslims' approval for the United States as the war in Iraq dragged on.

From the standpoint of opponents of the U.S., the distaste among Muslims for the Iraqi War is a godsend. The radical extremist groups are seeing a boon, not just to recruitment, but also to financing, to contributions, and to the spread of radical ideology itself.¹⁰ Expanding GWOT beyond the pursuit of the organization responsible for 9/11 and not concentrating on ways to defeat the ideology of this movement has resulted in the United States losing its "upper hand" in GWOT and inadvertently inviting additional enemies. Radical extremists have discovered two lessons regarding the appropriate response to America: 1) The United States staying power for long drawn-out and messy conflicts is limited, and 2) infliction of casualties has the potential to sway public and political support against military operations.¹¹ Thus, the war on terrorism is quickly becoming a war of attrition. Radical extremists have embarked on a campaign that they recognize will take years, if not decades.¹² The situation in Iraq is precarious. If the United States fails, its credibility within the Middle East and the world is likely to diminish. In addition, in all likelihood, Iraq would turn into the new training ground for radical extremists. If the United States is successful, the impact on other anti-democratic regimes would be enormous. This is why the United States' assumed allies and other apostate regimes in the region are working strenuously, yet stealthily, to defeat the American efforts in Iraq.¹³ Democracy would symbolize the end of these leaders' rule and regimes.

The Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project found that over the same six year period (2001-2006) America's global image and support for the war on terrorism was declining among the United States' closest allies as well. Great Britain and France approval ratings for the U.S. both dropped by over 30%; Germany and Spain approval ratings dropped by over 50%; and Japan, one of the United States' closest allies, dropped by over 20%. Approval ratings for the U.S. led War on Terror showed the same downward trend. Great Britain, Germany, and Russia's support dropped by approximately 30% each while France's support dropped by over 40% and Japan's support dropped by close to 60%. During this same time, the United States' approval rating for GWOT among its own citizens declined by 18%.¹⁴ By pursuing OIF, the

United States has lost international support for GWOT, has increased its enemies in the region and has lost domestic public support for its foreign policy decisions. Regional security in the Middle East is important to the United States' interests but it should not have been pursued solely as a military mission or under the GWOT banner. This lack of clarity surrounding the desired end state that the United States hopes to achieve in its war on terrorism provides evidence that a long-term foreign policy strategy is warranted. To be successful, the strategy must incorporate all elements of national power, clearly identify the threats, opportunities, and risks associated with taking action or not taking action, and assign responsibilities and identify appropriate measures of success to which responsible parties are held accountable to achieve.

Who is the Enemy?

The first step in establishing a revised strategy is to understand who the enemy is and why it is gaining in popularity among Muslims around the world and the impact U.S. actions have on these trends. The 9/11 Commission Report released in July 2004, found that the enemy the United States faces is not terrorism but the al Qaeda network, its affiliates, and its ideology. The Commission recommends creation of a strategy that matches the United States' means to two ends: dismantling the al Qaeda network and prevailing in the longer term over the ideology that gives rise to Islamist terrorism.¹⁵ The first "end" identified by the Commission, dismantling the al Qaeda network, has received the most effort by the United States to date. Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), undertaken by the U.S. in response to September 11th, was successful in toppling the Taliban from power and taking away al Qaeda's safe haven in Afghanistan. In addition, the United States and its allies have killed or captured many top al Qaeda officials which have slightly weakened al Qaeda. Unfortunately, al Qaeda is a decentralized network, with several different nodes located around the world, each with an ability to lead and direct the organization. Thus, even if the main leadership is destroyed (i.e., Osama Bin Laden), the other nodes can continue to operate independently. This is not to say that the U.S. should not continue to pursue individuals that are known al Qaeda operatives, it should. Al Qaeda and its followers are currently the only known and capable transnational terrorist threat in the world. Videotapes recently released by al Qaeda indicate that they are regrouping and taking control over the Waziristan Province in Pakistan. The fighters shown on the tapes are shouting, "bin Laden forever! Long live al Qaeda!" Akbar Ahmed, a professor of Islamic studies at American University, identified the videotape as an indicator that a dangerous resurgence was taking place, "It [al Qaeda] has regrouped, reformed and re-emerged with new

vigor, and this is a very dangerous emergence.”¹⁶ The development provides evidence that additional effort is still needed in countering al Qaeda and its radical ideology.

A Pew Research Center poll taken in June 2003 revealed that there is an unhealthy preoccupation in the Muslim community with belonging to a supranational group. Eighty percent of the respondents in Indonesia and Pakistan, along with seventy percent of respondents in Lebanon, Nigeria, and Jordan, and a growing number in Kuwait, Morocco, and the Palestinian Authority agreed that obsession with belonging to a greater, solidified Muslim community exists and is growing within the Muslim population in their countries.¹⁷ This trend is changing how recruitment takes place for radical extremists. No longer is a top-down identification occurring but rather followers are *choosing* to join these radical organizations so that a self-selection process is taking place. These self-starter terrorists, who are self-recruited and self-trained, use the vast wealth of instructional materials posted and made available on the Internet by al Qaeda operatives and leadership, to carry out jihads around the globe.¹⁸

What Drives Muslims to Join These Radical Organizations?

Before a new U.S. policy strategy can be constructed to counter these terrorist groups, the popularity of the ideology among Muslim youths must be understood. So what does drive Muslims to join radical extremist organizations? Leaders of these groups use specific political, economic, or societal circumstances and power relationships as a means of motivation. They concentrate on the inactivity of Muslim countries and their leaders in the face of perceived injustices, which they identify as being caused by the U.S and other Western nations’ policies or actions. By drawing on secular grievances and a perceived lack of official government action, extremists convince susceptible individuals that they must take matters into their own hands, thereby also legitimating the use of all means to do so. The idea that new jihadists are striving to establish a new caliphate by expelling foreign “occupiers” from Muslim lands is an especially attractive recruiting tool, and one that resonates well in areas where youth unemployment is great.¹⁹

Unemployment in Muslim societies can be tied to two trends. A massive youth bulge with more than half of the Arab world under the age of twenty-five, and limited economic and social change. These two factors are producing new politics of protest. In the case of the Middle East, this upheaval has taken the form of a religious resurgence. The cause for this unrest is a sense of frustration and anger among the populace that has been given some wealth but no voice. The Middle East is the poster child for the theory of trust-fund states that have regimes becoming rich through natural resources rather than innovation and modernization. Easy

money means little economic or political modernization. The “unearned” income relieves the government of the need to tax its people – and in return provide something to them in the form of accountability, transparency, even representation. Middle Eastern regimes ask little of their people and, in return, give little to them.²⁰

In *The Arab Predicament*, Fouad Ajami explains it best when he says, “The [radical extremists] call has resonance because it invites men to participate, [in] contrast to a political culture that reduces citizens to spectators and asks them to leave things to their rulers. At a time when the future is uncertain, it connects them to a tradition that reduces bewilderment.”²¹ The total failure of political institutions in the Middle East to meet the needs of their people, along with the perception that the U.S. is supporting these regimes rather than standing up for the rights of the people is giving rise to increased radical extremism. Radical organizations recognize that playing the role of a pseudo government by actively providing social services, medical assistance, counseling, and temporary housing which the “official” government is not adequately providing lends credibility to their cause.²² In addition, research shows that radical ideology is not appealing to the poorest of the poor nor is it spurred on by Islam as a religion. Instead radical ideology is appealing to the educated hordes entering cities of the Middle East or seeking education and jobs in the West. These people left their identity group (family and tribe) and entered a world that produced disorientation. This disorientation is what radical extremists capitalize on by convincing the disoriented that their confusion would be solved by recourse to a new, true Islam.

Al Qaeda and its transnational movement are extremely adept at capitalizing on this lack of “voice” within Muslim countries. Studies of al Qaeda and its organization have shown that many of the people in al Qaeda are from Egypt and Saudi Arabia, places that are intolerant of any form of dissent.²³ Al Qaeda and its ideology movement are seen as outlets for these people to express their voice or dissatisfaction. Unfortunately, martyrdom via suicide is encouraged as the path one must take to be heard. Radical extremists use the attention and publicity that results from these sensational attacks as a form of coercion and intimidation to recruit additional followers. Terrorists need audiences because without an avenue for exposing these acts to the general public, transnational terrorism would fade away.

Another development that has contributed to the rise in terrorism has been the proliferation of state-controlled and state-run Middle Eastern satellite channels such as al Jazeera, al Arabiya, and al Manar. The governments that control them are not democracies that believe in freedom of speech. Instead they are authoritarian regimes or dictatorships that believe in directing the media towards serving their strategic interest of staying in power. Most

of the countries that run these media outlets, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt, Jordan, and United Arab Emirates are considered allies of the United States. The survival of these regimes depends on maintaining control and power over the populace of their countries. Consequently countries that say they are cooperating with the United States in fighting terrorism on one hand are doing everything possible with the other hand to produce more terrorists. The issue basically comes down to the rule of survival, these families or dictators rule in exchange for giving radical extremists a voice in their countries.²⁴ A quick look at al Jazeera's web site or watching their broadcast reveals that the news, as reported, is not balanced. They do not portray terrorism as a bad thing, the line between legitimate jihad and illegitimate jihad is blurred, and the U.S. military is characterized as an occupation force. These images and portrayals produce a generation of young people in Muslim countries who look upon Osama bin Laden and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi as heroes and the United States as a hypocritical oppressor based solely on how they are portrayed on Arab-run media.²⁵

A Pew Research Center study released in June 2003, found support for the U.S. led war on terrorism among Muslims had dropped significantly from 2001. In addition, and perhaps more significant, was the finding that solid majorities in the Palestinian Authority, Indonesia and Jordan, along with half of those in Morocco and Pakistan, say they have at least some confidence in Osama bin Laden to "do the right thing regarding world affairs".²⁶ This finding represents a real threat to the United States because it indicates that the ideology that al Qaeda perpetuates is resonating in the minds of moderate Muslims. Radical extremists are not the majority in Muslim countries and they are a small representation of the whole population. Therefore it is critical that the United States understand the ramifications of losing moderate Muslim support. The United States needs to be conscious of the impact and perception its foreign policies and actions have on influencing moderate Muslims to turn away from the West and turn towards radical extremists' ideology. The expansion of GWOT into a conflict beyond the pursuit of the terrorists who perpetrated 9/11 is an example of how U.S. policy can radicalize Muslims.

Recommendations

What steps should the United States take to combat the al Qaeda inspired movement and increase worldwide support for U.S. foreign policies? First the United States needs to recognize that it is fighting a war of attrition with its adversaries. The focus in the past has been to fight radical extremists as an event-driven response. This approach will not be successful in a war of attrition. Instead the U.S. must turn its strategy into a long-term, multi-generational response.

Al Qaeda's trademark is protracted and very precise, detailed planning. The U.S needs to take the same approach and "fight fire with fire". The myopic approach the U.S. has taken currently won't work against radical extremists. The U.S. should focus its efforts on determining where it wants to be in the next several decades, rather than years, and how it can best shape the world in order to regain its position and influence as a leader in the global environment.

One premise of this revised policy should be to focus actions on giving to the world what the United States has in abundance - a belief in a better future for all individuals. What is sacred about America is not its land but its union based upon the belief of a better future. The U.S. government does nothing to encourage this trait among its citizens instead it springs readily from within most Americans.²⁷ This belief in a better future should become the foundation from which foreign policy emerges in the twenty-first century. Actions taken must be consistent with the message the United States conveys in its policy. Deeds must match words. Therefore, when the U.S. talks about democracy it needs to back democrats and not autocratic regimes or dictatorships.

A second premise of U.S. foreign policy should be to promote freedom of opinion and speech. Insistence by the United States that the governments of Muslim countries allow political space for people to express their ideas and views is critical. Debate is a vital part of democracy and should not be feared. Giving people the ability to express their views and opinions peacefully provides an alternative to joining radical movements. One complaint coming from the Middle East, when it comes to freedom and democracy, is the U.S has one set of rules that applies to Muslims and one set of rules that apply to the rest of the world.²⁸ U.S. foreign policy must strive for the betterment of *all* people *everywhere*.

An action the U.S. could pursue in order to influence Muslim governments to become more responsive to their people would be to threaten to withhold the billions of dollars in financial and military assistance the United States provides to governments within the Middle East. The U.S. provides over three billion dollars a year to various autocratic regimes. Egypt is by far the largest benefactor receiving \$1.3 billion. The other largest benefactors are; (in descending order) Jordan (~\$460M), Lebanon (~\$43M), Yemen (~\$25M), and Oman (~\$16.5M).²⁹ Yet many of the leaders of these governments take this assistance with one hand while teaching their own people that America is bad with the other hand. What is needed is for these leaders to de-legitimize terrorism in their own countries. None of these Arab leaders have condemned Osama bin Laden by name. No fatwa has been issued condemning his acts.³⁰ Therefore, the United States should use the financial assistance provided to Middle Eastern regimes as leverage to encourage these governments to allow for privatization of the media,

freedom of speech, establishment of legitimate rule of law organizations (police, courts, prison), promote human dignity, and denounce terrorists and terrorism by name. Refusal to oblige means financial assistance is curtailed until processes are put into place to legitimately pursue these goals.

Historically, pressuring autocratic regimes and dictators that produce oil to be more responsive to their people has been contrary to U.S. foreign policy. The United States has been willing to “look the other way” when these regimes have taken steps to inhibit freedoms within their countries for fear that these regimes would decrease their oil production and drive up oil prices. This fear is legitimate but a bit tenuous. Oil is a commodity that is traded openly on the world market therefore oil-producing countries are not in the totalitarian position to wield oil as a weapon against the United States, as the majority of people have come to believe. Oil production and export is a supply and demand business. With no other meaningful sources of revenue available to them, Middle Eastern countries *must* sell their oil. Once the oil is on the world market, they cannot control where it ends up. These regimes could try to affect the short-term price of oil by cutting back on production; however since there are other nations in the world producing oil it is highly likely that these countries would simply increase their production to meet demand.³¹ In addition, the United States imports the majority of its oil from its closest neighbors; Canada and Mexico. Thus, the “oil” argument for showing leniency towards these regimes is unfounded.

One avenue that would increase American influence in the world and simultaneously eliminate the doubts raised regarding the United States intentions in the Middle East would be to reduce U.S. dependency on oil. High oil prices allow Saudi Arabia and Iran, the world’s first and second largest oil exporters and two of the largest financiers of radical extremism, to become awash in money. This means that these two countries, plus other corrupt oil states in the world, can keep their old means of repressive governments in place and continue to finance radical extremists as they desire. Not only does this increase the threat to the American people, it also undermines U.S. efforts to force these regimes to adopt democratic values.³² A simple solution would be to pass legislation requiring car manufacturers to boost vehicle mileage standards in the new cars they are building. Studies have shown if cars average 40 miles per gallon, it would reduce consumption by 2 to 3 million barrels of oil a day: which translates into a sustained price drop of more than \$20 a barrel of oil. This would drop the price of oil to below \$50 a barrel, which would have a significant impact on the economies of oil-producing nations around the world. The large surpluses would evaporate and along with them, the ability to remain an oppressive regime and to finance radical extremists.³³

A third premise of U.S. foreign policy in the future should be to provide aid based on positive humanitarian needs and deliver this aid directly to the people in need. A nationwide poll conducted by Terror Free Tomorrow in Indonesia one year after American tsunami assistance began, indicated that Muslim public opinion has not only remained favorable to the United States, but has increased as a direct result of American humanitarian assistance to the Indonesian people. The same trend happened in Pakistan, where the United States provided humanitarian aid after an earthquake in 2005. Polls show that the number of Pakistanis who have a favorable opinion of the U.S. doubled from 23 percent in May 2005 to more than 46 percent after American earthquake aid was received.³⁴ The key will be to focus American efforts on positive rebuilding and a vision for a better future. In order to effectively pursue this strategy, the United States will need to bring all instruments of national power into a coherent and effective campaign to promote liberty, freedom and a better future for all global citizens. The President needs to lead this effort as the Commander in Chief of the Executive Branch and not simply of the military. All federal agencies need to play an equal role in this strategy if it is to be successfully implemented. Congress needs to support the strategy by passing legislature to ensure that all elements of national power are employed and sufficiently resourced for the long run.

A fourth premise of U.S future foreign policy should be to recognize that the U.S. cannot win the war on terrorism unilaterally. The expertise and tools needed to combat radical extremists do not reside in any one country. Rather tools can be found among various nations, institutes, and individuals. The United States should avoid engaging in absolutist terminology when it comes to describing actions the U.S. deems necessary for future success. Many issues surrounding GWOT and in particular, the war in Iraq are not viewed as black and white by most nations in the world. The use of absolute terminology was seen to be devoid of nuance and middle ground which caused many countries to perceive U.S. foreign policy pertaining to Iraq as violating international law and sovereignty.³⁵ Doubts about the motives behind U.S. actions and its policies are undermining America's credibility abroad.

Today's reality is that the U.S. is the world's sole military superpower but economically the world is becoming multi-polar because globalization is leveling the playing field. Americans constitute one twentieth of the world's population, but manage to produce a quarter of the world's pollution and garbage while consuming a quarter of the world's energy. The U.S. has been able to live beyond its means because the rest of the world continues to buy U.S. Treasury bills. Selling its debt – both public and private – around the world has always been easy. If the United States continues to expand its war on terrorism beyond pursuing the masterminds of

9/11 and ignores the fact that its foreign policy and actions are viewed by the majority of the world as imperialist endeavors of control and domination; other countries could “vote” with their reserve currencies and choose not to buy U.S. debt. The implications of this action would leave U.S. foreign policy untenable over the long run.³⁶

These recommendations do not warrant that the United States should change its policy to satisfy anyone other than its own citizens. The American public must understand what effect U.S. policy has and how it impacts other people around the world. The principles of democracy necessitate that U.S. foreign policy should be re-evaluated and discussed periodically so a consensus can take place to ensure that the policies actually serve the interests of the United States and its citizens. Once this debate takes place, the American people will understand how U.S. policies will be received by other people in the world and the U.S. government can enter into global situations with the public’s eyes wide open.³⁷

Measures of Success

What measures should the United States use to monitor how effective a revised, long-term, national security and foreign policy strategy would be in achieving its objectives of countering radical ideology, safeguarding the U.S., its citizens, and its national interests? First, the United States must move away from a metric that focuses almost exclusively on kill-and-capture to something that focuses more on breaking the cycle of terrorist recruitment and replenishment.³⁸ Second, given the evidence from the earlier analysis that ineffective governments contribute to the rise of radicalization among Muslim populations, the United States needs to assess and monitor good governance in Muslim states.

The World Bank has several indicators they use to measure the effectiveness of governments world-wide. Five of these indicators represent areas that every country in the world should work hard on improving in order to thwart the expansion of discontent and stymie the feelings of futility among their populace. The first indicator, “Rule of Law”, is a measurement of the quality of the confidence the World Bank places in the rules of society within a given country as seen by fair law enforcement practices, just court systems, and the prevalence of violence and crime in a nation. The second indicator, “Freedom Ranking”, quantifies political freedom and civil liberties into a single combined index on each sovereign country’s level of freedom and liberty. The third indicator, “Voice and Accountability”, gauges the extent to which citizens have the ability to participate in the political, social, and economic processes in their respective country. The fourth indicator, “Government Effectiveness”, focuses on the inputs required for those in power to be able to produce and implement effective policies and to deliver

public goods and services. The last indicator, “Control of Corruption”, is a measure of the exercise of public power for illegitimate means or corruption. The presence of corruption is viewed as an expression of the lack of respect afforded to the laws and established norms of a given nation. All of these indicators, except “freedom ranking”, are measured on a scale of -2.5 to +2.5, with a higher score indicating better governance. Freedom ranking is measured on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 representing the most free and 7 representing the least free country.³⁹

Improvement of a given country’s index by +.10/year in any given metric would be an indicator that the country is moving in the right direction towards improvement. A decrease of a given index by more than -.15/year in any given metric would be an indicator that the country’s policies and governance need to be watched and perhaps given international assistance as necessary.

Conclusion

The importance of constraining or eliminating the growth of radical extremists is a key to accomplishing stability and peace around the world. There are many components that play into the composition of a nation or a society. As the United States begins to re-evaluate its actions and foreign policy in the future, it should picture these components as strands in a rope. Each strand represents the various components that build a successful nation or society, such as rule of law, educational opportunities, military, economic opportunities, governance, human rights, freedom of expression, etc. These strands wrap around each other and become the integrated foundation upon which a nation or society is built. A secure environment is needed in order to successfully “braid” these strands [components] into a strong rope [nation or society]. Recognizing the importance of the people in determining the best form of government for themselves the United States can only influence the actions and policies it will implement and not what is best for everyone else in the world.

Americans need to remember that building democracy takes a long time and a lot of struggle. There have only been two republics in the world’s history that have lasted longer than two hundred years. Ancient Rome is one and the United States is the other. Rome fell because of domestic political instability, overextension and reliance upon the military and fiscal irresponsibility.⁴⁰ Expanding GWOT beyond retaliation for September 11 has put the United States on the same path that Ancient Rome traversed thousands of years ago. The United States must get off this path, re-evaluate where it wants to be in the twenty-second century, and begin to implement a strategy that will get it to its desired end state. Along the way, the United States needs to be mindful of how its actions and policies can open the proverbial “Pandora’s

Box". Through careful and considerate effort the box can again be closed while leaving hope out to flourish.

Endnotes

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